

November 29, 2010

CalGeo REACHING NEW HEIGHTS!



VP Rex Upp reaching new heights on Mt. Whitney, 10/1/2010

CalGeo - The California Geotechnical Engineering Association is reaching new heights in representing all of California's consulting geotechnical professionals. Over the past several years, the board has held multiple planning sessions to re-evaluate where we are going as an association and how we can better serve our profession. Here's how we plan to be of greater value to our members moving forward:

We now have an upgraded website, and even more online improvements are on the way. Check us out at www.calgeo.org.

Members now receive our **monthly electronic newsletter, the e.Geo**, with industry news, trends and details of what CalGeo and our members have been up to. The e.Geo is available *FREE* to all interested parties, not just to CalGeo members, so please forward this email to all those you think may be interested (professionals and those who support the profession) and encourage them to sign up.

CalGeo now webcasts our **regional meetings** so discussions on topics that are important to the profession are available to our widespread audience. Last week we presented our second webcast to 124 professionals at 14 locations around the state, on the important topic of earthquake loading on retaining walls.

As an advocate for our members, CalGeo is **forward looking** when planning topics for our events. Our next Loss Prevention Seminars will help members navigate the issues that can "bite us in the rear" if not done correctly. See below for more details.

CalGeo has taken steps to **increase the reach of our organization**, including working to encourage engineering geology consulting firms to join CalGeo. Engineering geologists are a critical component of the consulting geotechnical engineering profession, and their inclusion in our organization will enhance our strength and credibility as we advocate on behalf of our members on regulatory and legislative matters. Also, although CalGeo always has been and remains an association of consulting firms, we now allow and encourage individual memberships for qualified professionals.

Additionally, CalGeo has just started a major membership evaluation and recruitment drive. Member firms soon will be called by a board member to discuss how CalGeo is serving you and how you would like us to serve you better. We also will be asking you for names of geotechnical consulting firms that are not members but should be. Please think about who those firms are so you can give us that information when we call. We look forward to hearing from you.

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November Regional Meeting

Seismic Earth Pressures on Deep Building Basements

By Craig Reid, Upp Geotechnology.



Dr. Marshall Lew, MACTEC
Engineering & Consulting

CalGeo's November Regional Meeting featured a timely discussion by Dr. Marshall Lew, Senior Principal and Vice President of MACTEC Engineering and Consulting, Inc. in Los Angeles. Current building codes require retaining walls be designed for seismic earth pressure, even though there is an absence of evidence that seismic earth pressure has caused retaining wall failures during large seismic events.

The methods for determining seismic earth pressures are based upon models from the 1920s with uniform sand backfill on small shaker tables. These models do not represent practical site conditions. Recent research shows that seismic earth pressures are significantly lower than what common practice indicates when using the Mononbe-Okabe method.

Dr. Lew emphasized that when providing design recommendations for the seismic condition, use active earth pressure plus the computed seismic increment. Do not apply the seismic increment to the at-rest pressure. The seismic load distribution resembles an equivalent fluid pressure, as opposed to an inverted triangle suggested by the Mononbe-Okabe method. Also, retaining walls less than 12 feet tall may not need to be designed for additional seismic loading.

Under certain circumstances, inclusion of additional seismic loading on retaining walls is overly conservative and unwarranted. However, it is premature to neglect seismic loading in design. Additional research is needed. Dr. Lew's findings and provisional recommendations are summarized in the "[Seismic Earth Pressures on Deep Building Basements](#)" paper from the SEAOC 2010 Convention proceedings.

I attended the webcast of this seminar with about 15 other geotechnicals at the San Jose office of ENGEO. Stay tuned to future e.Geos for opportunities to view webcasts of our events closer to home.

COMING! Loss Prevention Seminars January & February 2011

Mark your calendars! The Loss Prevention Seminars of 2011 will help members navigate the issues that can "bite us in the rear" if not done correctly.

Southern California

Saturday, January 22, 2011

Embassy Suites in Santa Ana

Northern California

Saturday, February 5, 2011

Courtyard by Marriott in Fairfield

Detailed information and registration will be available on our website, www.calgeo.org in December. Watch the December e.Geo for announcements regarding these Loss Prevention Seminars.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Member News

New Member Welcome!

Welcome to our new Active member, Redwood Geotechnical Engineering, Inc. Joe Rafferty is the firm's primary representative. Joe can be reached at the main office:

Joe Rafferty
7450 Railroad Street
Gilroy, CA 95020
(408) 848-6009
redwoodgeo@gmail.com

Member Contact Correction

The 2010-2011 CalGeo Membership Directory was recently mailed to our members. We regret an error in the spelling of Wallace-Kuhl's primary representative's name. Please contact David R. Gius at the information below:

David Gius, Jr.
Wallace-Kuhl & Associates
dgius@wallace-kuhl.com

Our sincerest apologies to David!

Annual Conference 2011

Save the Date: 2011 Annual Conference



Within the next couple of months, more information will become available regarding the 2011 CalGeo Annual Conference, to be held April 14-16 at the beautiful Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. Details will be provided on our website and in future e.Geos. Registration packets will also be mailed to our members in January. Mark your calendar today!

Safety First

Help Workers Manage Stress

Courtesy of the California State Compensation Insurance Fund

In today's world, we deal with a multitude of stressors... the economy, uncontrollable world events, our work, and personal or financial pressures, etc. When the stress-defense response is continually activated without recovery downtime, it could have negative consequences on an individual or in the workplace. Feelings of stress can lower morale, reduce productivity, and increase accidents, injuries, health problems, or violent outbursts - all of which can affect the safe and efficient operation of the workplace. Individuals can't control all the stress-producing elements in their lives but they can learn to balance those stresses and control how they respond to

them.

Make sure stress awareness is part of your employee training program. Acknowledge that it exists in everyone's life and that individuals vary in their stress thresholds and recovery rates. Let employees know that although some stressors can be controlled and managed, some stressors cannot be changed. But, also let them know what resources are available to them should their stress become a condition they're unable to manage on their own.

Keep communication lines open by talking to employees. Periodic staff meetings may provide a forum where employees can air their frustrations or share their ideas and perhaps develop stress reduction solutions. If changes in employee attitudes are observed, talk about what's going on. Keep employees informed of job changes and allow them to participate in decision making, where possible. Make sure your compliments on work practices outnumber your criticisms. It helps if the employee is a good match for the job. Encourage employees to adopt a healthy personal lifestyle including practicing relaxation techniques, establishing good eating habits, monitoring alcohol or drug consumption, exercising, and developing a personal support network.

Stress management is about balance. Balance stress with relaxation, compliments with criticisms, work with play, problems with rewards, and positives with negatives. Negative workplace stress takes a toll on employees and employers but constructively managing it can have significant payoffs to employee productivity and business profitability!

[Questions-Comments-Feedback](#)

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